

# RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH 1. 18.

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[NO. 7.]

## A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

(Continued, from page 35.)

**SECONDLY.**—Will Jesus accomplish the purpose for which he came into the world, will he save all his people from their sins? That all men might repent, return unto God and be saved, is the prayer of ALL who love their God; and who have experienced the blessed effects of holiness and righteousness. This has been the prayers of good men in all ages; and even of some who have believed in the absolute necessity of some of the human race being forever miserable, for the glory of God, and the happiness of the saints. It is an event so desirable, that Jesus said, "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." While then such is the desirableness of the event, which saints on earth pray for; and at which saints and angels rejoice. May we not anticipate the period, when the joys of heaven will be made perfect in the salvation of every creature? Should any doubt, let such seriously consider what is to hinder the accomplishment of this divine mission. Would the good man, who hates sin, and loves righteousness, throw obstacles in the way? would holy angels? would Christ the Lord? would Almighty God? No. God wills that all should be saved. In conformity to which, Christ came to save,—Angels rejoiced when the Saviour was born—Saints in heaven are glad, when the sinner turns from his sins—and saints on earth pray continually that all, yea, every sinner may turn to the Lord his God, and obey him in righteousness. What then shall prevent the salvation of all men? will it be said, the perverse and obstinate will of man? That man is perverse and obstinate, is readily admitted; too much so indeed for his own good. But is this the only obstacle in the way of salvation? It is, unless man's eternal misery is necessary to the production of the greatest possible good; in which case, the will and purposes of God, not man's will, is the obstacle. Not believing this, it can only be admitted, that the will of man alone prevents. But is it not man's ignorance of the things which belong to his peace, that is the cause of this perverseness? Then in order for the continuance of this perverse opposition to Christ and his Gospel, man must remain in eternal ignorance. But so far from this "it is written in the Prophets and they shall all be taught of God"—and Jesus saith, "he that hath heard, and learned of the Father cometh unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." But shall the gracious will of the Father of mercies be rendered null and void, merely to gratify the perverse will of the creature, when the gratification will terminate in his eternal misery, and the violation of the divine purposes? Had it, on the other hand been said, that God yielded up his own will and pleasure, to the will of the creature, when it would tend to the happiness of man; something might be said in favor of the supposition:—Yet even then, it would be saying, that God's purposes did not embrace the best good and happiness of man: but to say God yields his will to the will of man, which ends in his endless misery, is inadmissible by scripture, as well as good sense. God is said to work all things after the counsel of his own will,—Jesus saith, "all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto me," and of him it is said, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness." Paul hath declared in plain intelligible language, that God hath given the Saviour a name, which is above every name, that "at the

name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Could it be proved that Christ was not able to accomplish the divine will, and to perform his mission here on earth; the knowledge of this, would interrupt our joys on this occasion, as it would leave room for doubt whether, we, our children, or our friends should ultimately receive the glad tidings of great joy, and be partakers of SALVATION.

The perverseness of the will of man, was, by the omniscient eye plainly seen, and by the divine prescience clearly known, before ever God sent his son to save from sin; and it is surely reasonable to suppose, that according to the design of the Father, the Son was endowed with every quality or perfection adequate to the accomplishment of God's gracious designs. Jesus has given us a caution not to enter upon any great or important undertaking without first sitting down and counting the cost; without carefully examining whether we possess the power and the means of finishing what we begin. See Luke 14, 28 to 31st vs. "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it, begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" Shall we not believe that Jesus, who came to fit and prepare man as a lively stone for that building, that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, who came to erect an holy temple for the habitation of the most high God, attended to the same caution of wisdom, and counted the cost ere he undertook the building? And may we not suppose, that the king of righteousness, who came to make war with the prince of darkness—the prince of the power of the air that worketh in the children of disobedience, did duly consider the force he would have to encounter, search into the strength and various wiles of the arch enemy, and knew perfectly ere he commenced the war, how it would terminate. In proof of this we may urge a declaration of the apostle, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." These weapons of warfare are undoubtedly the same that Paul recommends to the Ephesians, and which consist of those celestial graces, and principles of the gospel, which Jesus himself employs, and which are competent, being mighty, to the pulling down the strong holds made by the perverse wills of men—casting down all those vain imaginations produced by pride and loftiness, and the bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. When every thought of man is brought into obedience, then must he be saved from his sins. A passage in Jude corresponds with this, "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." When therefore, the ungodly are convinced by the spirit of Jesus of their un-

godly deeds and hard speeches, they will be made obedient to his will. This is further proved by the declaration of the Saviour, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince (or reprove) the world of sin and of righteousness, and of judgment." When therefore, the world is convinced by the comforter or holy spirit of grace, of Sin, and of righteousness; every knee will be prepared to bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue will be willing to acknowledge, "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

The same divine benevolence, which brought a Saviour into the world to save man from sin, will call into exercise all the energies of the divine nature to accomplish the glorious purposes of God. Thus the Apostle reasons, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Hence we may rest assured, that Christ will save his people from their sins; which people are all mankind. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." The glory of God shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. This is that MYSTERY which kings and Prophets desired to see but could not; that mystery unfolded in the gospel and made known to the apostles, as he thus writes, that, "ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ," which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by his spirit; that the gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel." Again, "having made known to us the mystery of his (God's) will, according to his good pleasure, as purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

Surely then we have cause of much rejoicing, and with the greatest propriety, we may celebrate with religious devotion the birth of a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, and avail ourselves of this auspicious morn to proclaim liberty to captives the opening of the prison to them that are bound,—comforting the mourner—binding up the broken hearted,—proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord—and declaring the glad tidings of great joy to all people.

The attention of the audience is now invited to the contemplation of the character of him whose nativity we this day celebrate, in prayer and praise. In him was displayed all those moral virtues and christian graces, which render man happy. Jesus was a pattern of gentleness, meekness, and humility; he loved mankind in sincerity of heart; and to their good he devoted his life. His friendship was as unchangeable as the divine nature, and his great desire was to remove grief and affliction from the world; by him the sick were healed, the blind received their sight, the mourner was comforted, and life and immortality were brought to light. Yet in all these works of benevolence how was he received—how was he treated? When doing good it was attributed to the devil, he was called a wine bibber, a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners. He was reviled, but he reviled not again. He is denied shelter from the chilling dews of night, his zealous disciples would call fire down from heaven; but he meekly replies, I came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. He was falsely accused, buffeted, condemned and sentenced to die; but as gentle as the lamb he opened not his mouth, he complains not, men curse but he blessed. At length the meek and lowly Jesus was brought to calvaries mount. He, who but a few days before, entered Jerusalem with surrounding multitudes crying, Hosannah to the Son of David, while children joined their infant voices in praises of Zion's king, scattering branches of palm in his way, was brought forth as a criminal, even he, in whose mouth was found no guile, was nailed to the cross. Hear the agonizing groan! the plaintive cry, "my God, my God, why hast thou for-

saken me," and hear, Oh hear, the last prayer of him who loved you! that prayer which in softest music dropt from the dying lips of your Saviour, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Greater love hath no man, saith Jesus, than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. But God commendeth his love, toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us—for all.

Let us well consider how inconsistent we shall act, if while we profess to rejoice before God, for his great mercies in sending his Son to save us from sin, we indulge in sinful practices; among which may be numbered, an uncharitable, unfriendly disposition, a spirit of hatred and bitterness, which leads to variance and strife. Let those who profess to be the friends of Christ and his Gospel, hear what he says, "ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." What hath he commanded? "That ye love one another as I have loved you." Again, "by this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This love will cause you to imitate your redeemer, it will lead you to the chamber of the sick, doing all in your power for their good—the widow and the orphan will be remembered—and the poor and friendless will not be turned penniless from the door. You will often attend the house of worship, cultivating peace on earth, and good will to men. It most surely is a pleasureable employment, to cultivate brotherly love, and christian fellowship; whereby the sick find a friend, and the needy obtain relief. Does any one doubt this, let him come and taste, and see that the Lord is good and gracious, and he will discover the joys of holy friendship, and that there is pleasure unspeakable in doing good.

## COMMUNICATIONS.

### FOR THE INQUIRER

To the Hon. JUDGE GOODALE, of Bernardstown, Mass.

Dear Sir.—The conversation which we had a few days ago, on the Calvinistic and Universalian doctrines, has so deeply impressed my mind, that I have resolved to send it to the press, that it may be presented before us in such a form as to enable us thoroughly to consider its merits and its bearings. I should not do this, did I not consider you as able an advocate of the Calvinistic doctrine as any other man; and, therefore, do not suppose the cause can suffer by an attack from me, for want of any support, which it is capable of receiving. And, as you professed, in our conversation, to be willing to renounce your side of the question, and to embrace mine, if that could be proved inconsistent, and this consistent with truth, I am not without hopes of diverting from the cause, of what I esteem error, the aid of talents which are capable of doing much service on the side of truth. As we came to nothing decisive on our first topic, viz. the question whether natural evil be the cause of moral evil, or *vice versa*, I shall omit to state what was said thereon, engaging, at the same time, if occasion require, to maintain that natural evil is the cause of moral evil. I may not be able to state our conversation in the exact order in which it was pursued, nor may I be able to state the precise language used: but I will candidly endeavor to state the substance, and hope you will correct any essential error which you may discover therein.

You contended that an infinite price was paid for the redemption of man—that the debt due to divine justice, for the sins of the whole world, was entirely paid by the sufferings of Jesus Christ. I replied, if that be the case, all sinners are exonerated from the demands of justice. Let their sins be few or many, small or great, the debt being paid, they are clear, and have no satisfaction to make. You rejoined, that, altho' the debt was paid, yet the sinner is not to be released but on certain conditions; viz. faith and repentance. I answered, if that be the case, it is not certain that the debt is really paid, as you first stated. Your statement is this; Christ has paid the debt which the



sins of the whole world compose, but, unless, I have faith and repentance, the debt, which my sins compose, is *not* paid; and, if half, or two thirds of mankind should never have faith and repentance, the debt to divine justice would lie against them to all eternity—a debt that never can be paid, and yet was actually paid eighteen hundred years ago! Would it be a fact that Christ has paid the debt in question if none of the human race had never possessed faith and repentance? If I owe a debt, and a friend pays it, the debt certainly does not lie against me, whether I believe it or not. I may imagine it is still due, but my imagination about it is false. In this way we argued a considerable time, but you discovered nothing but what you still believed, both that the debt of the sins of all is paid, and yet, to those who do not comply with conditions, it is not paid, and never will be. Well, said I admitting the debt of sin to be paid for us, by Christ, how are we rewarded according to our works, as the scriptures declare? You replied as follows.—Suppose I were sentenced, for some crime, to be imprisoned thirty days, this I justly deserve—a friend ascertains, that, by paying a certain sum, I may be released; he pays it, I may then be released if I will.—Well, suppose you are released within fourteen days from commitment, when you deserved to remain in prison sixteen days longer, do you receive what you deserve? Ans. Yes. But I should think you did not. In order for this comparison to apply, you should first have deserved imprisonment for thirty days, or only fourteen days provided somebody would pay a *fine* for you. The amount of the statement is this,—you deserve thirty days imprisonment; but, if you have a friend who may buy off a part of what you deserved, why then you did not deserve it. You have suffered only fourteen days imprisonment when you deserved thirty: and therefore you have not suffered according to your deserts, but are prevented by the interposition of your friend. In this case you are saved from punishment, and that which you deserve; which will not compare with the salvation by Christ. He (say the scriptures) shall save his people from their sins, (not from punishment which sins deserve) and turn away every one of you from his iniquities—not from the punishment due for iniquities. If sin deserves infinite punishment, all mankind must suffer it; for all have sinned. If, therefore, they should be rewarded according to their deserts, not one soul could be saved. But this they never deserved; for they deserve nothing which transcends their capacity. Reply. I think you erroneously contend that sin is measured by our capacity. If I offend against an inferior, it is a crime of the smallest magnitude. If against an equal, the crime is greater. If against a superior the crime is greater still. Therefore, if I offend against God the crime is infinite. The crime rises with the dignity of the personage against whom it is committed. Well, Sir, let us try your statement at the bar of reason. If I should rob you of your coat what should I deserve? Ans. Say confinement in the State's prison ten years. Well, Sir, suppose a mischievous puppy should seize upon your coat and rend it in pieces; i. e. rob you of your coat; what would he deserve? Did any body ever suppose a puppy deserved as great a punishment as a man, for such an offence? The destruction of a man's coat, by a puppy, is as much of a sin, for ought I see, as the same act done by a man; and is as much an infinite sin; and as much deserves an infinite punishment, on the supposition that sin is measured by the infinitude of Jehovah. I make a strong case, the more clearly to show the fallacy of your hypothesis. The taking of property clandestinely, or without legal right, and depriving the owner of it, is, in itself, the same crime, whether it be done by a beast, an idiot, or a man of understanding: but, we should think it ridiculous enough if human laws made no distinction on account of the mental capacity of the perpetrator. But human authority, in this case, marks the standard of dignity against which the transgression is committed; and, if the transgression is to be measured thereby, the beast, or the idiot, is as criminal as the man of profound understand-

ing. Reply. I suppose there are degrees of punishment, and that two persons may suffer a punishment infinite in duration, and yet one of them suffer far more intensely than the other. Two men may be confined in prison an equal number of years, or whipped an equal number of stripes, and yet one suffer as much again as the other.—Well, Sir, that supposition supports my position, and destroys yours; for, if sin were measured by the infinitude of God, and not by the capacity of man, there would be no difference between the criminality of any two persons; and, consequently, none in the severity of their punishment. Besides, if a punishment, infinite in duration, would admit of such a variety of degrees as to its intensity, it would, in many cases, hardly admit of being *called* punishment. Suppose a man to possess a capacity of ten degrees—I mean a capability of ten degrees of happiness, and he should eternally be punished in one degree, it follows that he would eternally be, nine to one, a happy man. Reply. That does not follow—as I said before, the two men in prison, for the same term, may be, one of them perfectly miserable, the other far less so. Well, Sir, what makes the one less miserable than the other? Is it not because he has some remaining happiness? Suppose the misery of the wicked, during eternity, is to consist of despair. In that case, a person to be perfectly miserable, must have no hope, and, if another person be not in complete despair what is the reason? is it not because he has some hope?

Reply. No.—There is, and can be, no hope in a state of endless punishment.

Well then, there is, and can be, no difference in the intensity of punishment. Where there is no hope there must be complete despair; and complete despair admits of no degrees of intensity.

Reply. I think it does.

What, Sir, do you think there can be degrees in that which is perfect and complete?

Ans. Yes, I think so:—A man may be in complete despair of mind, and at the same time, suffer much otherwise, in addition.

Ques. How so?

Ans. Suppose a man to be bereaved of his friends, and the greatest agony of mind should come upon him, might he not suffer an addition of bodily pain?

Ans. No:—The infliction of bodily pain upon him would suspend his mental sufferings. It is on this principle that physicians cure maniacs. Let a man in distress of mind, be subjected to the lash, in such a degree as to produce bodily pain, and, while the lash is applied, he will not experience the mental anguish from its previous cause. This is an established principle in natural philosophy. Therefore, instead of the possibility of producing any accession to the misery of a person in perfect despair, such means as you mention for the purpose would be more likely to diminish it. All possible pain of mind prevents any possible pain of body; and *vice versa*. Hence the supposition that there may be degrees in a punishment of endless continuance, is unfounded in the nature of things. To suppose there may be degrees of punishment in eternity, is only to suppose the continuance of our present state; and it ought not to be called, in that case, a state of punishment, but a state of rewards and punishments. In this present state, a person deprived of all hope is perfectly miserable; while those who have more hope than despair are happy; and, if they have perfect hope, are perfectly happy.

JOHN BROOKS:

FOR THE INQUIRER.

*The practice of Calvinists in direct opposition to free toleration, and to the letter and spirit of the constitution.*

When we consider the enlightened views and liberal policy of the convention which framed the constitution, as well as the instrument itself, nothing can be more evident than that they intended to stay the progress of tyranny.

and unnerve the arm of usurpation in matters of faith and religion. And under the full conviction that religious tyranny was about to be abolished, and the reign of free enquiry to commence its benign operation, without the aid of priest-craft, the good people of Connecticut carefully considered and adopted this constitution as their *guide* and *pole-star*. It is also equally certain that the statutes were recently revised in order to conform to, and comport with our written constitution. But according to the *customary liberality* of the Calvinists they construe the 7th section of the statutes on education in such manner as to make the statutes and constitution at open war with each other. The constitution declares that "no person shall be classed with or associated to, any *congregation, church or association*." Notwithstanding these plain and positive declarations of the constitution, the *mathematical conclusion* of the *calvinists* is, that all mankind are born heirs to the *simple, sublime and intelligible* doctrine of Election and Reprobation. And as soon as they can lisp, the Westminster catechism containing an abstract of calvinism, is put into their hands, with orders to commit the precious deposit to memory. The Instructors of district schools are *compelled* by the visiting committee, to teach their pupils, that "God hath fore ordained whatsoever comes to pass: That He governs all his creatures and all their actions: That He hath elected a few from all eternity to everlasting happiness, and reprobated the rest of mankind to interminable torments." The visiting committees are generally composed of one or more orthodox clergy, who take the lead in visiting schools.—In order to stimulate the scholars he gravely informs them that in awarding the customary premiums, particular regard will be had to those who shall make the greatest proficiency in acquiring this all important system of orthodoxy. If an instructor refuse from scruples of conscience to instruct his scholars in the catechism, he is promptly told he must submit to his *superiors*, or abandon his profession. If a scholar declines learning it, he is expelled from the school! But let us inquire what kind of toleration is this which *compels* instructors to teach matters of faith contrary to their own *reason experience and belief*? Is this in conformity to the letter and spirit of a free constitution? Or do the statutes require that *all men* shall be educated *Calvinists*? The statutes indeed require that the visiting committee "superintend the *general instruction* of the scholars." But who but a calvinist would infer that "*general instruction*" extended to matters of faith? Does not general instruction refer to the arts and sciences? And does not *particular* instruction in matters of faith and religion come within the province of *parents and guardians*? This exclusive right of teaching orthodoxy is neither expressed nor implied by the statutes, and the constitution expressly forbids it.

If the visiting committee are to superintend the rising generation in the study of orthodoxy I would respectfully suggest to the next legislature, the propriety of declaring by statute what orthodoxy is.

The immoral tendency of the doctrine contained in the catechism ought to exclude it entirely from our schools. If parents wish their children to learn it let them teach it, but by no means compel instructors to teach what they know to be false. Let a child be led to believe that God governs all his words and all his actions, will he hesitate to lie, steal and murder? If God governs and directs his actions, he will at once perceive that he is not responsible for his conduct. He will unavoidably be forced to the conclusion that man is a mere machine, moved by the impetus of Almighty power. But this ridiculous and inconsistent doctrine has been amply refuted in the former numbers of your paper; but the mode of *propagating* it from one generation to another has not been thoroughly attended to. The *precious seeds* of calvinism must be sown in infancy, or it seldom takes deep root, contrary to the general laws of nature it seems to flourish best in a *weak or barren soil*. Let this *insidious* mode of cultivating it be abandoned, and it will soon sink into its own native insignificance.

We are all sensible that impressions made upon the tender mind have a permanent effect, it is therefore highly important that the mind should be stored with correct ideas and principles. The precepts and obligations of morality should be strenuously enforced on all proper occasions. Let those intrusted with the management of youth be careful to fortify their precepts by their own good examples. And let them not fail to inculcate, that *real Religion* does not consist in *whimsical ceremonies and observances*; but in the exercise of love and gratitude to God, and in the exercise of *charity, benevolence*, and the *social virtues* towards their fellow men. Let not the rising generation suppose that *piety* is measured by the length of the *phiz*, or that *christianity* is weighed in the *false balance of professions*. Happy would it be for mankind if this system of teaching *creeds and dogmas* could be abolished, and the doctrine of *morality* substituted; but as long as mankind subscribe to the calvinistic method of teaching *dogmas for facts*, so long may we expect the clouds of *superstition and intolerance* will obscure the *mental vision* of the rising generation.

#### A SCHOOLMASTER.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

#### THE MORALITY OF THE GOSPEL; OR THE IMMORAL TENDENCY OF CALVINISM.

NO. 6.

We have examined at some length the general tendency and effects of the spirit of Calvinism,—a spirit which arises in a great measure from the arbitrary, unmerciful and vindictive character which the calvinistic dogmas ascribe to the Deity; but before we dispose of this fruitful subject, we must notice more specifically some of the practical consequences of this spirit upon the moral and religious character of the devotees of orthodoxy.

As we have attempted to shew, the spirit of calvinism is, that of *fear and servility* towards God, and *uncharitableness, and vindictiveness* towards mankind. The practical tendency of this spirit upon the religious, moral and social character, is obvious from the nature of it, and if not, experience has left no doubt on the subject. Let us for a moment analyze the religious worship of the votaries of Calvinism. They believe that God *hates* sin, and is *angry* with the wicked every day, and that there is a state of *enmity* subsisting between man and his maker, occasioned by original sin, as well as by actual transgression; and they also believe, that the *justice* of God requires that they should suffer all the punishment which the wrath of an offended God can inflict, and that never to have an end. Can a person who believes in such a God, and who considers such to be the relation in which he stands towards him, worship, reverence and adore him? He considers his God as his greatest enemy, as filled with divine wrath towards him, and that his justice requires that he should be eternally miserable. Cursed with the sin of his primitive progenitor, and from the depravity of his nature, being totally unable to avoid actual transgression, he is every moment offending his maker, and the object of his holy wrath and vengeance.

It is the necessary consequence of such sentiments, that it should be the first object of the creature to attempt to effect a *reconciliation* with his Creator. He attempts to make his *peace* with his God, to conciliate his favour and to appease his wrath. He approaches the altar with fear and trembling, and attempts to supplicate for mercy, and hopes to escape the dreadful punishment of his wrath, and which he himself, believes due to his sins. Is not fear and servility the spirit of such devotion? Is it not essentially the same as a *slave* pays to his tyrant master? Is not this the same spirit and the same homage, with which a culprit who had forfeited his life and is under sentence of death, would approach the tribunal of power and mercy? Can there be any devotion without love? Is this the religious worship which a christian offers to his God, or is it the way,



ship of idolaters to their angry Deities with altars stained with the blood of victims offered in sacrifice?

As the object of such worship is to appease an angry God, and reconcile him to the worshiper, it supposes that in order to produce this reconciliation, God, and not man is to *change*. It is an attempt to produce a change in the will and purposes of him, in "whom there is no variability nor shadow of turning." It is not so much our present purpose to exhibit the absurdity, and we may say, the impiety of this worship, as to unfold its practical effects and the immoral tendency of it. For which purpose let us inquire how, this change in the dispositions and purposes of God is to be effected; how his wrath is to be appeased and his favour conciliated? This is attempted by means and expedients, the same in principle, as those which have characterised almost every system of idolatry. The angry Gods of heathenism could only be propitiated by *sacrifices*; by the blood of goats and bullocks slain. Such also were the religious rites under the mosaic dispensation; the firstlings of the flock were to be offered in sacrifice, the altar stained with blood and perfumed with incense. Moses sprinkled both the book and the people with blood. It is not at the present time attempted to conciliate the wrath of God by a sacrifice of the lamb or the goat, and although at the altar no victims bleed, and no incense ascends, yet in principle the worship is the same.

It is now said that the heart and all the natural affections must be *sacrificed* to God; that this is the most acceptable offering; that the greater sacrifice we make of our happiness and the more gloomy and miserable we render ourselves, the more acceptable we become to God. It is said we must take up our cross, mortify the flesh, and crucify the natural man; and this is supposed to be pleasing to God and to recommend the devotee to his favour. From the influence of such false sentiments of God, celibacy, became a virtue, and not only privations but actual infliction of injury and self punishment, was regarded as highly meritorious in the sight of God. To be truly pious, one must withdraw from the world, and devotee himself to serving God, and hence monasteries were established, which became the receptacles of idleness, sloth and vice. The greater the sacrifice of natural feelings, the greater was supposed to be the piety; and hence these religious establishments, were generally located in gloomy and retired places, and the miserable inmates of them, immured within the monastic walls of a prison were deprived even of a sight of the "glorious luminary of heaven" and the animating face of nature. To be most distinguished for piety, was to retire from the world, and neglect all the *duties of life*; to become most acceptable to a God of infinite love and goodness, was for the devotee, voluntarily to deprive himself of all enjoyment and to endure the greatest misery and distress. The whippings and severe austerities practised in Catholic countries, by various sects of ascetics is well known; and it is equally obvious that these practices and austerities, have formed the leading and principal part of the religious worship among all nations where a dark and gloomy superstition has prevailed. The systems of sacrifices, expiations, offerings, propitiations, are all founded upon the same principle, and their worship directed by the same spirit. The principle, is, that the performance of religious rites and ceremonies is rendering a *service* to God, is pleasing to him and tends to conciliate his favour. All false and idolatrous worship consists of the performance of rites and ceremonies which are believed to propitiate the wrath of an angry God, and to recommend the worshipper to his favour; and in all such systems, mortifications, and privations are believed to be services the most pleasing and acceptable to God. All such religions have their devotees, fanatics, ascetics and penitents, who devote their lives to the service of God and think they recommend themselves to him by their austerities, privations and sufferings. The performance of penance, they consider a service rendered to God, and expect to be rewarded in heaven for all their privations and sufferings on earth.

They suppose that they have suffered in the cause of their God, and that by their services and sufferings they have laid him under an *obligation* towards them, and created a *claim* in their favour, which he cannot disregard. The more zealous they have been in his cause, and the greater their sufferings the greater is to be their reward; and hence martyrdom of which all false religions can boast, affords the strongest assurance of the highest happiness in another world.

No people have exceeded the Hindoos in their austerities. Devotees and penitents, says Beinard, "go long pilgrimages not only stark naked, but loaded with iron chains like those about the necks of Elephants. Not long ago one of them finished measuring the distance between Benares and Juggernaut by stretching himself on the ground and rising, which must have taken up years to complete." In the Institutes of Menu, it is said of a Bramin who wishes to be perfect, "let the twice born man dwell in a forest, his faith being firm and his organs wholly subdued; let him eat green herbs, roots and fruit; let him wear a black antelope's hide or a vesture of black; let him suffer the hair of his head, his beard and his nails to grow continually; let him slide backwards and forwards on the ground, or stand a whole day on tiptoe, or continue in motion rising and sitting, alternately. In the hot seasons let him stand exposed to five fires, four blazing around him with the sun above. In rain, let him stand uncovered where the clouds pour the heaviest showers. In the cold season let him wear humid vesture, and let him increase by degrees the austerity of his devotion; and enduring harsher and harsher mortifications, let him dry up his bodily frame. Let him advance in a straight path towards the invisible northeast point, feeding on water and air, till his mortal frame totally decays, and his soul becomes united with the Supreme." The same superstitious notions prevailed among the Egyptians, Persians and Grecians: "several of the sacred rites of the Egyptians, says Doctor Priestley, consisted of mourning; whilst the sacrifice on the festival of Isis was burning, the people kept beating themselves." It is stated by Jablonski, that "no person could be initiated into the sacred rites of Mithra among the Persians until he had gone through eighty degrees of torture of different kinds. He was first made to swim over a great space of water and then to throw himself into the fire. He then passed a long time in solitude, abstained from food, &c. &c. If he survived these, he was initiated into the mysteries."

It is a position demonstrably certain, that the spirit and object of the religious worship of the different systems of heathen idolatry was essentially the same as those of catholicism during its most flourishing periods; and as calvinism is only a modification of catholicism, the religious worship of calvinists at the present day is founded upon the same principle and directed by the same spirit; it differs only in degree. Do not all real calvinists suppose that by the observance of religious rites and duties, they are serving God, and recommending themselves to his favour? Do they not suppose that by attending conference meetings, encouraging the various religious societies and objects, contributing to the support of missions; to spread the gospel and circulate the bible, they are rendering important services to God, which are calculated to recommend them to his favour? Do they not suppose, that in a state of nature as they express themselves, they are the objects of God's wrath, and that they must do something to conciliate his esteem? Do they not also believe that mortification, and penance performed through a spirit of piety, is pleasing to God? Are not their religious services entirely abstracted from their moral & social duties, and considered as rendered to, and as having a direct influence upon the Supreme Being? Such is the effects of the spirit of calvinism on religious worship, giving it a similar character to that of catholicism and the superstitions of heathenism; its object being the same, namely to appease the wrath of an angry God, and propitiate his favour. What can be more opposite to the spirit of devotion as disclosed in the gospel. We are

there informed that God is love and that he will not have sacrifice, *but mercy*, and that those who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. There can be no true devotion but what proceeds from love in the heart towards God; this inspires reverence homage and devotion; and makes religious worship pleasing and agreeable, being the spontaneous tribute of a grateful heart. T.

## RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, February 8, 1823.

### MR. MAFFITT.

The Ecclesiastical Council, mentioned in the last *Intelligencer* as having convened in Boston, at the request of the Rev. John N. Maffitt, to investigate the charges brought against him by the Editor of the *Galaxy*, after a session of a few days, adjourned to this town, where they have been in session since Tuesday last. The Council rose last evening; and we are authorized to state, that they have *unanimously* **ACQUITTED** Mr. Maffitt, from all those charges.

*R. I. Religious Intelligencer.*

The following letter from Joseph A. Merrill, Presiding Elder of New-London District, appeared in the *Providence Religious Intelligencer*, of Jan. 17.

"*Mr. Badger: Sir*—In reading the Trial of Mr. Buckingham for an alledged libel on Rev. Mr. Maffitt, I was struck with some surprise at the inference drawn by Mr. A. Jones, jun. from Mr. Maffitt's expressing that he sometimes had doubts respecting christianity. And I feel it a duty to communicate to the public a conversation I had with Mr. Maffitt, at his own house in Boston, some time in the month of December, 1821. The substance of which, is as follows: In a conversation with him on the subject of the reformation then in Boston, he expressed very freely to me, the trials temptations and doubts that frequently assailed his mind; and that he was sometimes tempted to doubt all religion, and almost every thing else. He regretted that he was not better prepared to defend the truths of christianity; and also expressed a desire to become acquainted with those books which would have a tendency to fortify his mind against such attacks, solve his doubts, and strengthen his faith. The inference I drew from this conversation, was, not that he was an infidel; but that he was sensible of his inexperience in theology, was an honest enquirer after truth and anxiously desired a knowledge of the evidences by which the doctrines he had adopted were supported."

Yours, &c.

JOSEPH A. MERRILL.

Presiding Elder of New-London District,

*Providence, Jan. 13, 1823.*

In reply to the above, the Rev. Mr. Jones, makes the following declaration in a letter, in the *Intelligencer* of the 24th Jan.

"To draw an inference, when under oath, on such a subject, and, on such an occasion as the Trial, especially if that inference is represented to have, not any or slight grounds, must be most disreputable to any one. To be mistaken, or to misapprehend Mr. Maffitt, when my testimony is so explicit and positive, is equally disreputable, and can only be resolved into an accusation of perjury. Yet such are the accusations, or *insinuations* of the advocates of Mr. Maffitt, some of them, men from whom, on account of their office and character, more candour and magnanimity, or *discrimination* might be expected. I therefore conceive it to be a duty I owe to myself as a man and a clergyman, and to the public who are concerned to know the truth, to state; that my *testimony* cannot possibly bear the explanation which Mr. Merrill would give it; that whatever may have been Mr. Maffitt's conversation with

him, his conversation with me was entirely different; that in his conversation with me, he spoke of the *fact* of his having no belief in Christianity, not of *doubts* or temptations respecting it, nor of doubts concerning its doctrines; that his language with me was express, and did not admit of mistake, or misapprehension. Plain language has on all occasions been considered sufficient; but if in this case it is not sufficient, the following particulars as given in my testimony, must be conclusive. 1st, The fact that I was then friendly to Mr. Maffitt. 2d, His manner was not that of a person under doubts or temptations. 3d, He told it as a great secret. 4th, My answer to him, that if he preached the doctrines of Christianity he should *believe Christianity*. 5th, His request that I would give him a list of books on the *evidences of Christianity*, (not on the particular doctrines which he has since said he doubted.) 6th His declaration, that he did not read the Scriptures."

We feel it to be our duty to make a few remarks on the acknowledgement of Mr. Maffitt, as made to Mr. Jones, and to Mr. Merrill. In making these remarks, we assure our Methodist brethren, that we are not governed by any hostile spirit toward them as a denomination of Christians; neither are we possessed of any improper feelings towards Mr. Maffitt. It is to prevent men from yielding to momentary operations upon their passions, and to save them from that blind zeal, which makes them slaves, by destroying the exercises of reason and common sense, that we offer the following observations.

In our remarks we will admit the most favorable construction that can be put on Mr. M's. confession, although, in so doing, we may in the opinion of many, be unjust to Mr. Jones, that our observations may have the more weight with those who will suffer themselves to examine the subject before us. Mr. Merrill says, "in a conversation with him (Maffitt) on the subject of the reformation in Boston, he expressed very freely to me, the *trials*, the *temptations*, and *doubts* that frequently assailed his mind; and that he was sometimes tempted to doubt ALL RELIGION and almost EVERY THING ELSE. He regretted that he was not better prepared to defend the truths of christianity; and also expressed a desire to become acquainted with those books which would have a tendency to fortify his mind against such attacks, solve his doubts, and strengthen his faith."

This much from Mr. Merrill, whose testimony we presume, no Methodist brother will call in question. We will also agree with Mr. M. in his inference, that he did not consider Mr. Maffitt an infidel; "but that he was sensible of his INEXPERIENCE in theology, was an honest enquirer after truth; and anxiously desired a knowledge of the evidences, by which the DOCTRINES HE HAD ADOPTED were supported." Now we appeal to the good sense of all men, whether a man, who is "tempted to doubt all religion, and almost every thing else," can be looked upon as a man qualified to preach the great and important truths of the Gospel. We ask the reader for one moment to fancy himself in a chapel listening to as eloquent and powerful a preacher, as Mr. Maffitt is considered to be, who is urging sinners to turn to God that they may escape eternal damnation—telling them how much his heart is pained for them,—that for them, he sheds the briny tear; and while doing this, he is passing his white handkerchief over his eyes to wipe away the tears: or pressing the Holy Bible to his breast, speaks of the precious truths therein contained, the necessity of believing every thing written in that volume, in order to avoid eternal death, and ruin; urging people to a full faith in the divine word, or, that at the day of judgment he will be compelled to bid them an eternal farewell, and see them driven from the presence of God to dwell with Devils and damned spirits, while thus listening, suppose some one should whisper, *the preacher has serious doubts as to the truth of what he is preaching*. What we ask, would be the sensations of the hearer, and what opinion would he form of the preacher? Would he



consider him an honest man? I doubt it. A man who imposes upon us that, for truth, of which he has serious doubts himself, cannot strictly speaking, be an honest man.

We conceive that a sincere and honest man, would stop preaching, until he was fully convinced in his own mind; lest he should deceive his hearers, by preaching what might not be the truth. If Mr. Maffitt had sufficient reason to doubt the truth or reality of "all religion," he surely has been acting the part of the hypocrite, in his great exertions to drag people, especially the youth, up to the altar to be prayed for, that they might obtain that religion, (the reality of which he doubted) lest they should be cast beyond the reach of mercy, and be forever lost. The scriptures declare that "he that doubts is damned"—"He that believeth not is condemned already," and this no doubt Mr. M. has urged upon his hearers, while he himself had these doubts—and was in fact in unbelief.

Mr. M. by his labors produced a great excitement, or revival in Boston.—In the midst of this work of the Lord, (so called) he was visited by Mr. Merrill from New-London, and being questioned by Mr. M. as to this work which he was instrumental in producing, says, "he has great TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS and DOUBTS" and "was sometimes tempted to doubt ALL RELIGION, and almost every thing else;" and begs to be furnished with evidence in proof of Christianity. He leaves Boston for Providence,—there also a work commences, during which, he expresses the same doubts to the Rev. Mr. Jones, which he had mentioned to Mr. Merrill. Thus we find him travelling from place to place, and laboring day and night, to impose upon people that for truth, of which he had serious doubts himself; and harrowing up every feeling of their souls, with the direful apprehension of endless misery if they did not become religious, when he himself very much doubted the reality of religion.

There is another circumstance mentioned in Mr. Merrill's letter, which is, that Mr. Maffitt anxiously desired a knowledge of the evidences by which the doctrines he had adopted were supported." From this it appears that Mr. M. had adopted a system of doctrine without evidence. No wonder then he should have his doubts. We ask again. Can such a man be considered, as called, and qualified to preach the important truths of the Gospel? a man who after preaching some years, and who has been considered a chosen instrument of God in producing wonderful revivals, is found according to his own acknowledgement, destitute of the evidences necessary to support the doctrine he has adopted, who must have taken things upon trust which it was his duty to examine, and to be fully convinced of, before he attempted to preach. In these acknowledgements of Mr. M. we have an evidence of the truth of Mr. Jones' testimony, who asserts, that M. told him "that he did not read the scriptures."—Well may Mr. M. have doubts as to the truth of christianity if he does not read the scriptures in which the christian religion is taught to mankind, and which is the christians rule and guide in matters of faith and practice. Can Mr. M. be justified in using the scriptures when he acknowledges his ignorance of them, and upon their authority sentence men to eternal woe.

But perhaps Mr. M. understands the scriptures without the toil and labor of reading. He who could obtain, and use the thoughts of Mr. Walker as contained in his sermons, without perusing them, may with as much ease, obtain a knowledge of the scriptures.—It is well however, the reign of WITCHCRAFT is past, or something serious might happen to a man, possessing this happy facility of obtaining knowledge. But these doubts rise before us, and shew us that Mr. M. is ignorant of the scriptures, he wants evidence of the truth of what he professes to believe. Two things are now before us one of which we must choose. We must acknowledge that Mr. M. does not read the scriptures, is entirely ignorant of them, or, that the scriptures do not contain any evidence of the truth of Christianity, so that he is obliged to seek proof elsewhere.

We have in Mr Maffitt, the effects of that wild enthusi-

asm so much encouraged in these latter days, and which has operated so much to the injury of the methodist cause. It has been frequently the case, that young men, who have never troubled themselves about religion, and who never read the scriptures except at school, have been operated upon in one of those revivals, become converted, & filled with zeal. In the moment of enthusiasm they considered themselves called of God to preach, and have issued forth to teach mankind, when they themselves were entirely ignorant of the scriptures, and as destitute, as Mr. Maffitt is, of the evidences necessary to support the doctrine they had adopted, and whose efforts were only to work upon the passions and excite the fears of their auditors; and who had no other reason to offer why men should believe, than that they would be damned if they did not; and who knew of no way, by which a person might obtain religion, except by passing through all the feelings they had experienced.

But it appears that Mr. M. even had his doubts about *experimental religion*. He acknowledges before the Court in Boston that he "had doubts of the experimental effect of religion upon the heart." We cannot be surprised at his doubts on this point, as with all his experience, he was still destitute of the evidences of the truth of christianity; if the doctrines he had adopted were the doctrines of Christ. Nor are we surprised that he should doubt the experimental effect of religion upon the heart, if he had carefully noticed the falling away of those converts whom his zeal had made, and who had been brought to the altar by his importunity. It is an indisputable fact, that when these revivals die away, and the excitement on the mind ceases to operate, many draw back, as the phrase is, again into the world; and many more would, were it not that they are closely watched, and every symptom of a desire to quit the connection met with zealous labors to stop them.

It is not a matter of surprise, that a man who had laboured with so much zeal day and night, should doubt the experimental effect of Religion upon the heart, when he found it necessary to have spies, and runners to watch the movements of his converts, who had professed to have experienced religion, many of whom would escape from the toil, did not the persevering exertions of those appointed to watch over them prevent it.

Were those converts convinced by scripture doctrine of the truth of the christian religion: did they enjoy its salutary and heart cheering effects, they would be in no haste to forsake it. It is written "he that believeth shall not make haste to pass it over." Those flights of passion never convince the mind—they furnish no evidence of the truth of the doctrines of christianity; they leave the mind in the uncertainty of doubt; and subjected to varied temptations—even to doubt "religion, and almost every thing else."

#### *A serious question for the illustration of a certain D. D.*

The Dr. to whom the question is referred, is very desirous of proving the doctrine of total depravity. In his labors to effect this object, he says, "we are born totally depraved, and enemies to God." He also contends, that there is no alteration, or change at, or after death; and that when a man dies, his character is formed and fixed for eternity. Our question is.—What becomes of those infants who are born totally depraved, and enemies to God, and who die in infancy; many of them almost as soon as they are born?

We are unwilling to say, the Dr. believes in the eternal damnation of infants, lest he should consider it a foul aspersion, designed to injure him. Nor are we willing to say that he does not believe in his favorite hypothesis, that there is no alteration or change after death. Now as infants are born totally depraved, and enemies to God: those who die almost immediately at their birth, or a few days or weeks after, without meeting with any change while here: unless there is a change after death—must be damned. Not being able to solve the difficulty, and unwilling to charge the Rev. Dr. with inconsistency; we pro-

pose the question for his illustration. Whether he believes in the damnation of infants,—if not, how this totally depravity being, is to be saved, not having met with a change in this world. And we ask him to inform us of the correctness and propriety of the Saviour's conduct, in taking these totally depraved enemies in his arms, blessing them, and saying, "of *such* is the kingdom of Heaven."

*From the Universalist Magazine.*

*Messrs. Editors.*—A few days since, being on a visit at the house of a good old uncle of mine, who by the way is what they call an orthodox Deacon: I found him looking over the Boston papers; among other things which seemed to fix his attention, was a subject proposed for discussion by the "Boston Debating Society."—Viz. "ought a parent in any case to disinherit a child." My uncle seemed peculiarly interested with this subject, the more so, in consequence of his having the misfortune of nourishing and bringing up, what is commonly called, a 'spoiled child.'

The good old man after a few minutes of silent reflection, heaved a deep sigh, and said; hard indeed must be the heart of that parent, that can entirely give up a child. I told my uncle that I believed the subject was not stated exactly as it should be, that it should stand thus: Ought a parent in any case to discard a child, when the parent has the power to reclaim, and make him a penitent and dutiful son. The old gentleman, with some warmth, replied no man in his senses would propose a question like that, for the father must be worse than the evil one, to be guilty of such a character. My only answer was, be careful my dear uncle, how you apply a character to the God you worship, which you very justly consider worse than that of the adversary.

NATHAN.

*From the N. Y. Gospel Herald.*

#### ANOTHER CONVERSION.

A clergyman, a Mr. Thompson, of the Methodist persuasion, recently arrived in Philadelphia, from England. The Methodist brought him forward as their champion, to confute the Universalists in their discussion in the Berean Society, where Mr. Thompson was convinced of the error, and acknowledged the truth. He is now preaching the doctrine of the "restoration of all things."

*From the (Canandaigua) Plain Truth.*

Mr. Willis, of the *Boston Recorder*, in the Number of that paper for December 7th, has published an extract under the head, "Requisites to the labour of converting sinners," containing the following: "Do you ever feel anxious for his [a friend's] soul, that though it is an emanation of the eternal mind,—the brother of angels,—though its capacities for pleasure and endurance are boundless,—though immortality is interwoven in its very being, and the fields of its action and enjoyment occupy immensity and eternity,—and though it HAS BEEN REDEEMED by the blood of the Son of God, is yet in danger of being lost? of becoming an ACCURSED thing in God's kingdom?"!!—Here is what is called "orthodoxy," and we should really like to hear the author's answer to the question, What does this language of yours mean? He says that after a soul has been redeemed, it is in danger of being lost, and of becoming an accursed thing in God's Kingdom? Suppose this piece of a sermon were sent to the missionaries at Brainerd, and by them preached to the Indians; what would they make of it? Would they not ask, "If a soul is in danger of being lost, after it has been redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, does not that soul stand in need of another redemption?" And they might add to this, How is it to be a second time redeemed? Is the Son of God again to die upon the cross, or is it left for some missionary to effect what the death of our Saviour could not? Strange as it may seem, just such senseless prating as this has taken many thousands of dollars from needy and suffering families, and transferred them to missionary coffers.

#### POETRY.

*From the Philad. Advocate.*

#### THY WILL BE DONE.

When sorrow casts its shade around,  
And pleasure seems our course to shun;  
When nought but grief and care is found,  
How sweet to say—Thy will be done.

When sickness lends its pallid hue,  
And every dream of bliss has flown;  
When quickly from the fading view,  
Recede the joys that once were known;  
The soul resign'd, will still rejoice,  
Though life's last sand is nearly run—  
With humble faith and trembling voice,  
It whispers soft—Thy will be done.

When call'd to mourn the early doom  
Of one affection held most dear,  
While o'er the closing silent tomb,  
The bleeding heart distills the tear;  
Though love its tribute sad will pay,  
And early streams of solace shun—  
Still, still the humble soul would say  
In lowly dust—Thy will be done.

Whate'er, O Lord, thou hast design'd  
To bring my soul to thee in trust;  
If mis'ries, or afflictions kind;  
For all thy dealings, Lord, are just:  
Take all—but grant in goodness free,  
That love which ne'er thy stroke should shun;  
Support this heart, and strengthen me  
To say in truth—Thy will be done.

#### ORIGINAL ANECDOTE.

A few years ago a clergyman who was a zealous believer in total depravity, one day called upon one of his parishioners. He happened to take a seat by the side of a cradle, in which, an infant lay asleep. The babe had just begun to take a little notice of objects, and to smile when spoken to. The godly man engaged in conversation with the family. While conversing he turned his eye upon the infant which had awaked. It smiled upon him, as he was speaking. Upon which he exclaimed. Oh! you little VIPER laying there SMILING, with malice enough in your HEART to dethrone God, if you could.

*Confucius.*—This Chinese philosopher was born 551 years before Christ.—"Human nature," he said, "came to us from heaven pure and perfect; but, in process of time, ignorance, the passions, and evil examples have corrupted it. All consists in restoring it to its primitive beauty; and to be perfect, we must re-ascend to that point we have fallen from. Obey heaven, and follow the orders of Him who governs it. Love your neighbour as yourself; let your reason and not your senses be the rule of your conduct; for reason will teach you to think wisely, to speak prudently, and to behave yourself worthily on all occasions."—*Sec Le Compe*

#### NOTICE.

The Agents for the INQUIRER will confer a favor on the publishers, by collecting and remitting the sums due for the SECOND Volume.

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